



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Timothy M. Morrison
Southern District of Indiana**

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CONTACT: MARY BIPPUS

(317) 229-2403

Fax: (317) 226-5002

Cell: (317) 590-7928

SECOND RICHMOND CRACK COCAINE DEALER SENTENCED TO LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

Informant in Case Murdered

PRESS RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS - Rollie Mitchell, 33, Richmond, Indiana, was sentenced to life without parole late Thursday by U.S. District Judge Sarah Evans Barker. In November, 2009, Mitchell was found guilty following a jury trial of distributing more than 50 grams of cocaine base, commonly known as "crack" cocaine. The case against Mitchell was the result of an investigation by Drug Enforcement Administration and the Wayne County Drug Task Force.

Rollie Mitchell and Billy Hicks were initially charged in Wayne County for distributing cocaine to Tony Hurd during the summer of 2006. Tony Hurd was working as a confidential informant for law enforcement and agreed to conduct controlled buys of "crack" cocaine from various drug dealers in Richmond, Indiana under the supervision of law enforcement. In July, 2007, Mitchell and Hicks were charged in Wayne County for dealing "crack" cocaine to Tony Hurd. While Mitchell and Hicks were awaiting trial on the Wayne County charges, Tony Hurd was murdered. Hurd was shot eight times by a gunman while sitting in an automobile on a gas station parking lot near Dayton, Ohio, on August 2, 2007. After Hurd was murdered, Wayne County dismissed charges against both Mitchell and Hicks.

On January 30, 2008, a grand jury sitting in Indianapolis indicted Mitchell for distributing more than 50 grams of "crack" cocaine to Tony Hurd on June 6, 2006. In a separate, but related indictment in March, 2008, Billy Hicks was indicted also for distributing "crack" cocaine to Hurd. In November, 2009, after a two-day jury trial, Mitchell was found guilty as charged.

Mitchell did not face a mandatory life sentence. However, at the sentencing hearing, Judge Barker found that Mitchell participated in Hurd's death by arranging and paying for the murder of the informant, and further that the murder was deliberate and premeditated. As such,

Judge Barker applied the appropriate Sentencing Guideline associated with first degree murder, and imposed a life sentence without parole.

The investigation as to others involved with Mitchell and Hicks in the murder of Tony Hurd, Jr. remains ongoing.

According to Assistant U. S. Attorney Matthew P. Brookman, who prosecuted the case for the government, this was the second life sentence imposed in connection with this case. Billy Hicks, 37, Richmond, was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole in October, 2009, following his conviction at trial in July, 2009. Hicks' life sentence without parole was mandatory because Hicks previously was convicted of three felony drug crimes.

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